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President: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 14

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency (A/52/285)

Draft resolution (A/52/L.13)

The President: Exactly four decades have passed since this special United Nations institution, the International Atomic Energy Agency, was established in order to

> "accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world". [Statute of the IAEA, article II]

Over the years, the Agency has provided assistance to Member States in developing the peaceful application of nuclear technology. It has also played an important role in setting international standards and rules for ensuring nuclear safety, in promoting international cooperation in the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes and in implementing the safeguards regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

It is my sincere hope that the discussion of the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency will contribute to strengthening the support of the Member States for the Agency's activities.

I now welcome the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Hans Blix, and invite him to present the report of the Agency for the year 1996.

Mr. Blix (International Atomic Energy Agency): The annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for 1996 is before the General Assembly. Let me begin by noting that the year since I last reported to this Assembly has brought several significant results. In May, the Agency's Board of Governors approved a Model Protocol additional to safeguards agreements — a Protocol which will give added teeth to the Agency's nuclear inspection system. In recent months, a new Convention on the safe management of radioactive wastes and spent nuclear fuel has been adopted and, in the area of liability for nuclear accidents, existing conventions and rules have been modernized and compensation amounts vastly increased. This year has thus seen a significant strengthening of the international legal infrastructure for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

This year, the Agency has also, as the President just noted, been celebrating its fortieth anniversary. Under its mandate, which was built on President Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" initiative, the Agency has two main functions: to enlarge the contribution of nuclear energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world; and to verify that programmes and facilities declared to be for peaceful purposes are peaceful.

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Over the years, this dual mandate of the IAEA has become increasingly important and relevant to the interests of member States. As the global use of nuclear techniques has spread and grown, the volume of work of the Agency has grown and new tasks have been laid upon it. Some of these relate to verification. Others deal with safety. Although nuclear power is the most visible — and, in many places, controversial — use of nuclear energy, the vast majority of other uses are non-controversial and of great practical importance, as in medicine, agriculture, industry and environment.

The IAEA currently spends about $50 million annually helping member States use nuclear technology for their development needs by providing training, expert services and equipment. In the early years, the focus was on the building of capacity in the area of nuclear science and technology. As such capacity has developed in many recipient States, often with crucial assistance from the IAEA, the emphasis has shifted to employing those national capacities, for instance, to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer, to help increase agricultural production or to provide clean water supplies. The Agency's technical cooperation programme and projects are thus geared to contributing very directly to the implementation of Agenda 21. Let me give only two examples from some 1000 assistance projects implemented annually by the IAEA.

In Africa, the Agency, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), has helped to eliminate rinderpest, a disease which has claimed the lives of millions of cattle. Out of 18 African countries where cattle had been infested, today only two show signs of the disease. Vital to this good result was the incorporation of nuclear-based diagnostic and monitoring techniques in a pan-African campaign launched in 1987.

The second example, the provision of freshwater resources, is an issue of major concern in many parts of the world. The use of nuclear techniques in the study of underground water supplies helps improve the management of these valuable resources. We are currently collaborating in this area with as many as 40 countries. For example, Agency collaboration with Venezuelan experts has resulted in the mapping of underground waters in the area of Caracas, and a strategy has been developed for the protection and sustainable use of these water resources. In North Africa and elsewhere, vast aquifers lie in arid and semi-arid regions and can be a uniquely valuable resource. However, these aquifers are vulnerable to overexploitation and pollution, and the Agency has provided assistance to use isotopes to determine sustainable levels of use of the waters and to protect them from pollution.

Let me mention further that the IAEA and the World Meteorological Organization have established the Global Network for Isotopes in Precipitation, which has been providing over the last 35 years the basic isotopic data necessary for applications of isotope techniques to the assessment of water resources in member States. There seems to be a consensus within the scientific community that the operation of this Global Network and the use of its database are essential in studying past and current climate change, including investigations related to the current El Niño event and the resulting worldwide changes of the weather pattern.

Regrettably, financial resources for development projects are under pressure everywhere. I must therefore underline that continued and adequate support from all member States for the Agency's technical cooperation programme is indispensable if one is to realize the "atoms for peace" vision, which is the dual quest to prevent the spread of a military use of nuclear technology and to facilitate the transfer of nuclear techniques for peaceful purposes.

I turn now to the IAEA's work on nuclear power. During the first two decades of the IAEA, there was great optimism in the world about the future use of nuclear power, particularly because of its capacity to compete with and reduce dependence on oil. However, in the last two decades several factors have led to a stagnation in nuclear-power construction in most industrialized countries: overcapacity in electricity generation in some countries, concern about nuclear accidents, concern about the management of nuclear waste and, lastly, the use of gas in combined cycle, which has emerged as an economically very attractive option for the generation of heat and electricity in many countries.

The IAEA is not urging any country to turn to nuclear power. The choice of energy sources and energy mix is the sovereign prerogative of each State. However, the Agency does perform work in several sectors which may make nuclear power more attractive and economical for those who opt for it.

First, the most time-honoured and traditional method is to help bring about the exchange of experience in the construction and operation of nuclear plants and in the development of new technologies for power generation,

fuel production and waste management. This is still done on a large scale through meetings and publications. Through exchange of experience, nuclear technologies, like other technologies, evolve, leading to improved reliability, safety and economy. Globally, nuclear power plants today have reached an availability of nearly 80 per cent, compared to 65 per cent in 1977. Unplanned outages are today on average below 5 per cent, which compares favourably with fossil-fuel plants. The second-generation reactors, which are here today, build on the vast global operating experience of the last decades. Some radical innovations in nuclear-reactor concepts are also being explored and could be introduced in the future.

Secondly, the Agency is pursuing and encouraging comparisons between the nuclear-power option and other methods of generating electricity — comparisons of cost and impact on life, health and environment. The other main options examined are fossil fuels, hydropower and renewables. Such studies are mostly undertaken in collaboration with other international organizations, but some case studies are also undertaken together with national institutes and energy ministries. And the purpose in all these comparisons is to provide Governments with material to better assess the energy options available.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the Agency is promoting nuclear safety in the operation of nuclear plants as well as in waste management. Although the ultimate responsibility for safety rests with the individual plant operator and the State, what has been termed "an international nuclear-safety culture" has been evolving in the last 10 years, with the IAEA as an active promoter. After Chernobyl, it was said that "an accident anywhere is an accident everywhere". That globalized concern has been met by a number of globalized responses, including new rules and extensive services by the IAEA to provide a basis for safety improvements. The services have included a systematic mapping of the shortcomings of several types of reactors from the Soviet era and the preparation of periodic safety reviews about all types of reactors.

For a very long time the IAEA has been codifying best nuclear-safety practices and has produced a comprehensive set of safety standards for nuclear power plants and for radioactive-waste disposal. Although formally non-binding, these standards have had considerable influence in member States. Sometimes they have even been directly adopted by member States. In the wake of the Chernobyl accident, steps have been taken to supplement these standards with binding international rules. Last year a Convention on the safety of nuclear installations entered into force, and over 40 States are now party to it. Secondly, in September this year a Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management was adopted. It has now been signed by over 20 States. Both these conventions provide procedures for peer review among parties in order to promote full implementation of the rules. Also in September this year, new rules were adopted concerning the liability for nuclear damage, as I mentioned. Years of complex negotiations resulted in a revision of the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and a Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage.

In his reform proposals the Secretary-General, noting that there is no United Nations organization devoted to energy generally, raises the question whether some focal point should be indicated. A forum for a dispassionate examination of the issue of energy in sustainable development might indeed be needed. The IAEA seems currently to be the only place in the United Nations system where the benefits of nuclear power as an energy source economically roughly competitive with coal — but free of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions — is explicitly referred to by Governments.

During the recent session of the IAEA's General Conference, several Member States and the European Commission pointed to the relevance of carbon-dioxide-free nuclear power in the context of the threat of global warming. Only the Agency's host country explicitly went on record with the opposite view. Let me cite some of the statements.

The representative of Japan said,

> "In our view, nuclear power will play an important role in response to the question of global warming. Provided that its safety is ensured, we look to nuclear power as a realistic energy option, as it excels in supply stability and offers low environmental impact free from greenhouse-gas emissions."

The representative of the United States, Secretary of Energy Federico Peña, said,

> "It is essential that we remain capable of ensuring the safety of our nuclear reactors. With populations and standards of living increasing around the globe, nuclear energy could play a

potentially significant role — helping the world meet an ever increasing demand for energy while also helping to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases."

The representative of the Republic of Korea said at our General Conference:

"Korea firmly believes that nuclear energy will be one of the most sustainable sources of energy in the future, given the current situation in the global environment."

The representative of Canada said:

"Nuclear energy is a safe, environmentally sound and cost-effective source of energy. Canada is a firm supporter of the nuclear-energy option, which is an important component of a sustainable energy-supply mix for many countries. Among its many advantages, nuclear power significantly reduces emissions of greenhouse and other noxious gases that otherwise would have been emitted to the detriment of the environment and of human health."

The representative of France referred to

"the advantages of nuclear power in meeting increasing world demand for energy that does not produce greenhouse gases".

The representative of the European Commission said, lastly:

"With a view to the forthcoming Kyoto Conference on Climate Change, I should like to emphasize that the role of nuclear energy is important in addressing this serious problem. For Europe as a whole, use of nuclear energy is already avoiding the emission of some 700 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually."

These recent statements reflect a strong commitment to nuclear safety and an understanding that nuclear power has an important potential role to play in providing a significant portion of the world's electricity without environmental damage. They are indeed in line with what was said in the Declaration of the G-8 Summit in Moscow on nuclear safety and security in 1996, that

"we are committed to measures which will enable nuclear power, already a significant contributor to electricity supply in those countries choosing to use it, to continue in the next century to play an important role in meeting future world energy demand in accordance with the goal of sustainable development agreed at the Rio Conference in 1992." [A/51/131, p. 3]

It is also worth pointing out in this context, as was recently done in a report to the President of the United States, that if the some 430 nuclear-power plants in the world were closed today and the electricity they produce were

"generated instead by coal, world carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel consumption would be almost 10 percent larger than they currently are".

I have cited extensively on the capability of nuclear power to help us avoid carbon dioxide emissions because in various forums and secretariats of the United Nations system — focusing more on environment than on the need for energy — concerns about safety and waste have tended to overshadow these environmentally benign sides in nuclear power. For instance, during the special session of the General Assembly last June, I was the only speaker to mention the potential of nuclear power to help restrain carbon dioxide emissions. My personal conviction is that, with the development of an international nuclear-safety culture, the real risks in an expanded use of nuclear power — rather than the widely perceived risks — can be kept very low. And without belittling the value and potential of energy savings and of an expanded use of solar and wind power and biomass, I am also convinced that in the intensifying search for energy sources which produce little or no greenhouse gases, more Governments and broad segments of the general public will rediscover the nuclear power option.

An expanded use of nuclear power in technologically advanced countries could offer considerable alleviation in carbon dioxide emissions. While this is well understood by many Governments — as the quotations I have cited show — Governments have not yet generally been ready to act on this knowledge. Meanwhile, in my view, it is the duty of the IAEA to seek, together with other international organizations, impartially and objectively to compile and analyse all relevant data on the different energy sources on a comparative basis to enable Member States to make their assessments and to shape their policies in as well-informed a manner as possible.

I turn now to the other main function of the IAEA: nuclear verification and safeguards. In the early days of

the IAEA, verification was a relatively small-scale activity. Today, our Safeguards Department is budgeted at some $80 million a year and has some 600 staff, of which some 200 are inspectors. For economy and for effectiveness we have permanent regional safeguards offices in Toronto, for North and Central America, and in Tokyo, for Japan and the Far East region. Moreover, we have several inspectors stationed on a continuous basis in Baghdad and in Nyongbyon to perform the inspections requested by the Security Council. With the growth of nuclear power and the increased adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), more nuclear material and installations are verified by the IAEA. At the end of 1996, Agency safeguards were being applied to more than 154,000 tonnes of nuclear material. This is some 43 per cent more than five years earlier. Of this material, 74 tonnes were unirradiated plutonium or highly enriched uranium.

In a moment, I shall explain how nuclear disarmament measures may call for IAEA verification. At this point, it may be noted that the further nuclear disarmament proceeds, the stronger the interest will be in verifying that non-proliferation commitments are respected.

The importance of IAEA safeguards has been noted by the Security Council. In 1992, after a meeting held at the level of Heads of State or Government, the President of the Council made a statement as follows:

> "The proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The members of the Council commit themselves to working to prevent the spread of technology related to the research for or production of such weapons and to take appropriate action to that end.
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> "On nuclear proliferation, they note the importance of the decision of many countries to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and emphasize the integral role in the implementation of that Treaty of fully effective IAEA safeguards, as well as the importance of effective export controls. The members of the Council will take appropriate measures in the case of any violations notified to them by the IAEA." [S/PV.3046, p. 145]

For several years now, the Director General of the IAEA has annually briefed the Security Council on the IAEA's verification work.

As I said in my introduction, major steps are being taken to increase the capability of the IAEA safeguards system to detect any undeclared nuclear installations and material. The discovery, during IAEA inspections in Iraq in 1991, that Iraq — a party to the NPT and to a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA — had been able, undetected, to pursue a secret programme for the enrichment of uranium and weaponization, shocked the world. It convinced IAEA member States that the safeguards system would have to be strengthened. Considerable efforts to this end have been made by the IAEA, drawing on the inspection experiences in Iraq, in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and in South Africa, where the Agency was asked by the Government to verify the dismantling of its nuclear weapons.

New safeguards measures have been worked out which fall into four categories: first, access to more nuclear-related information; secondly, much greater access for inspectors to relevant sites; thirdly, the use of new detection techniques, such as environmental sampling; and fourthly, introduction of measures to facilitate operations and reduce costs.

Many of the new measures have already been introduced, as authority for them could be found in existing safeguards agreements. Those measures which required new authority have been incorporated in a Model Protocol additional to the existing safeguards agreements. I am pleased to report to the General Assembly that in May of this year, the Model Protocol was adopted by consensus by the Agency's Board of Governors and a number of States have already signed it. The sooner this Protocol is broadly accepted, the sooner the benefits of more effective verification and more cost-efficient verification methods will be felt.

There is no doubt that a higher degree of assurance about the absence of undeclared nuclear material and installations can be given for States which accept the additional protocol and the new safeguards measures. States which are anxious to have the best possible non-proliferation credentials should therefore see in the acceptance of the Model Protocol a means to further this aim. However, I must at the same time caution against any expectation that assurance of detection could ever get to 100 per cent. It may well be desirable in the future to devise an even more fine-meshed verification system than the one now emerging. Technical innovations, growing familiarity with inspection and acceptance of extensive verification by all States, including the declared nuclear-weapon States, may make this possible in future. At this

juncture, such a system would be more intrusive and expensive than would be acceptable to States.

Lastly, it is important for Governments, media and the public to be aware that no inspection system can give what is called "a clean bill of health". The inspecting authority, like a medical doctor, performs an examination and may report that there is "no indication of ill-health". To prove the total absence in a State of any "unhealthy" elements is beyond the ability of any inspectorate. It is thus necessary for Governments to judge, in the light of the thoroughness of the inspections undertaken and all other relevant circumstances, whether they will take a report that no indication has been found of any undeclared nuclear activity to mean that there is none.

What I have said about safeguards verification generally is also relevant to the IAEA's work under the Security Council mandate in Iraq, even though the investigations of nuclear activities there are based on exceptionally far-reaching inspection rights and have been going on since 1991. I recently submitted to the Security Council a comprehensive report providing an overview of the Agency's activities in Iraq over the past six years [S/1997/779, appendix]. After extensive work involving inspections, analysis of large volumes of documentation and of information received from Member States and former suppliers of relevant items, the use of new techniques for environmental monitoring, questioning of Iraqi staff and examination of items recovered from excavations, we have been able to construct a technically coherent picture of Iraq's past nuclear programme and to gain a good understanding of the scope of the achievements of the programme. Assessment of Iraq's reissued "Full, Final and Complete Declaration" against this coherent picture has not shown any substantial inconsistencies between the two. However, especially in the face of Iraq's past practice of concealment, it is not possible to guarantee that the picture is complete or that there could not still be some concealed components, activities and facilities, which did not form part of the technically coherent picture. As I have reported previously, the Agency has ensured the destruction, removal or rendering harmless of all discovered proscribed items and has placed dual-use items under monitoring.

The Agency has been much concerned about Iraq's refusal to facilitate the use by IAEA and the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) of fixed-wing aircraft to transport personnel and equipment within Iraq. We have been even more concerned about the recent attempt by Iraq to limit the free choice of inspectors. We must be aware that any refusal of access could be caused by an interest to conceal something. Such refusals therefore run counter to Iraq's efforts to convince the inspectors and the world that nothing is hidden.

While still pursuing a number of questions relating to the past nuclear programme and retaining the right to carry out further inspections if new information on the past programme comes to light, the Agency has been deploying most of its resources to the ongoing monitoring and verification activities, to guard against the possibility that Iraq might use its capabilities to exploit for nuclear-weapons purposes any relevant materials or technology to which it may gain access. In this regard, it must be recognized that Iraq retains, in its core of scientists and engineers, nuclear-weapons-related expertise and relevant documentation.

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the IAEA is asserting its right and duty to perform inspections under the safeguards agreement which remains in force. It needs to do so in order to verify the completeness and correctness of the initial declaration made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1993. At the same time, the Agency is verifying a freeze of the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as requested by the Security Council. I regret to report that no progress has been made in technical discussions with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, notably on the preservation of information related to past nuclear activities and on verifying that there are no movements or operations involving nuclear liquid wastes from the reprocessing plant under the freeze. On the positive side, let me mention that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has accepted the designation of additional inspectors, which will help to maintain our continuous presence in the Nyongbyon area, and that the canning operation for the irradiated fuel rods from the five-megawatt reactor is almost complete and that the cans are placed under IAEA monitoring. It would seem that it should be in the interest of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cooperate fully with the IAEA without further delay, as the Agency must complete verifying compliance by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its safeguards obligations before any sensitive components are delivered to the light-water reactors now about to be constructed. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains in non-compliance with its safeguards obligations.

Non-proliferation is strengthened by an increasing number of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Such zones may contain features that respond to particular needs or are of special importance to the group of States constituting a zone. Their composition may also be of importance to provide desired confidence.

The issue of a nuclear-weapon-free zone for the Middle East has been on the agenda of the United Nations for many years. The safeguards aspects have been the subject of considerable attention in the IAEA. As requested by the General Conference of the IAEA, the Director General's consultations with countries in the region have focused on the possibility of combining international NPT-type safeguards with regional or bilateral means of verification, a subject that has also been explored, most recently in May this year at a second IAEA workshop on such verification issues.

Let me turn now to some tasks which Governments have recently laid upon the Agency, or may place on the Agency in the not very distant future. In 1996, during the IAEA General Conference, an arrangement was made among the representatives of the United States of America, of the Russian Federation and of the IAEA to examine the modalities of possible Agency verification that nuclear material transferred out of the defence sector in the United States and Russia, notably material from dismantled nuclear weapons, is stored or is used for peaceful purposes. I need not remind anybody that the quantities of plutonium and highly enriched uranium that would come under verification are large. Extensive exploratory discussions have taken place during the past year to clarify the complex issues arising in what really would be a first scheme for international verification of nuclear disarmament. It was agreed during the recent General Conference of the IAEA that these discussions would continue.

No progress has yet been made in Geneva on the proposal for a cut-off agreement to stop all production of fissile material for weapons purposes. It is to be hoped that progress will soon be made in this area. The combination of verification of the storage or peaceful use of fissile material released from weapons and a cut-off agreement would give the world confidence that no fresh material could go into new weapons.

In recent years, many criminal attempts have been made to smuggle and sell small quantities of nuclear material and radioactive sources. This has raised both health and proliferation concerns, and has led to countermeasures by Governments as agreed at the Moscow Nuclear Summit in 1996. The IAEA has developed a programme which seeks to supplement the action of Governments and to coordinate a variety of measures directed at the problem. In some States, the Agency is offering advice on appropriate legislation, standards of physical protection and administrative machinery. In others, it has provided training. The Agency has also developed a database of all known cases of trafficking and has followed up media reports by contacts with official authorities. Efforts to counter nuclear trafficking must continue. We might also need to review the adequacy of the international Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, which now deals with nuclear material in international transit.

Let me finally mention, in this section about the belligerent atom, that the IAEA has been called on increasingly to assess to what extent, if any, former nuclear-weapons test sites pose radiological hazards. Now that the era of such tests is hopefully over, such assessments seem particularly appropriate. The Agency has organized international expert teams to perform such assessments at Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan, at Bikini in the Marshall Islands and at Mururoa and Fangataufa in French Polynesia. These assessments must, of course, be read in all their details. However, the overall impression is that the radiological legacy of the testing era on the sites examined is fortunately not alarming.

This is the last time I shall have the honour to report to the General Assembly on the work of the IAEA, and I should like to say before concluding that my elected successor, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, will take up his functions as Director General of the IAEA after a long and distinguished career at the Agency. He has been engaged in some of the most difficult questions facing the Agency during my time and he has often contributed decisively to their resolution.

Perhaps I may conclude this statement on a personal note. The first General Assembly session which I attended, as a Swedish representative in the Sixth Committee, was that of 1961, and I have visited all sessions since then. Despite the frequent and sometimes justified criticism of the United Nations and its family of organizations, I have always felt it was a tremendous privilege to participate in this multilateral work, whether in the United Nations or at the IAEA, whether as a diplomat or as an international official, whether helping to draft international norms, working on arms control or disarmament questions, or dealing with development. Despite the ups and downs of this work, not to speak of

the slow pace at which it often proceeds, there is often a very satisfactory feeling that helping, in however modest a way, to weave the fabric of a global community is meaningful. I think this feeling is also the most important driving force in the highly competent staff which has worked with me in Vienna these past 16 years and which has succeeded in maintaining and developing the IAEA as an effective mechanism responsive to the needs of Member States.

In ending this statement, I shall not fail to express my thanks on behalf of the IAEA and on my own behalf to the Government of Austria, which has invariably been an excellent host to the IAEA and to other Vienna-based organizations. I also thank the General Assembly for the kind attention with which it has listened to my reports over the years.

The President: I thank the Director General for his introduction of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and I would like to commend him for his dedicated service to the international community, to the International Atomic Energy Agency and to the United Nations. I wish him great success in his future endeavours.

I now call on the Permanent Representative of Japan to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.13.

Mr. Owada (Japan): My delegation would like to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Hans Blix, for his comprehensive introduction of the Agency's report to the Assembly.

As Mr. Blix will be retiring shortly, I should like to take this opportunity at the outset to express, on behalf of my delegation and on my personal behalf, wholehearted gratitude to him for his dedicated service to the Agency over the past 16 years. On a personal note, if I may, it is by a coincidence of history that I have the honour, on behalf of the sponsors and in my official capacity as Permanent Representative of Japan, to introduce this draft resolution on the question of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. But, at the same time, in my personal capacity, I am pleased to have this honour as a personal friend of Mr. Blix over the last 40 years. During his tenure of office, thanks to his outstanding leadership and his remarkable managerial skill, the Agency has developed into an international body of exemplary effectiveness and efficiency, faithfully fulfilling the objectives and principles set out in the Agency's statute. His achievements in the fields of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear energy use for peaceful purposes have been especially laudable and will be long remembered.

On behalf of the sponsors, Japan is pleased to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.13 on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Agency celebrated its fortieth anniversary this year. In addition to this celebration, however, this year has marked a number of significant achievements by the Agency. Permit me to draw your attention to some of them which are reflected in this year's draft resolution.

One of the Agency's most outstanding accomplishments is in the area of safeguards. Since 1992, the IAEA Board of Governors has had intensive discussions on strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system with a view to detecting undeclared nuclear activities. Deliberations on this matter culminated successfully in the adoption of the Model Additional Protocol in May 1997. All concerned States and other parties to safeguards agreements are therefore requested to conclude the additional protocols without delay.

In the area of nuclear safety, further codification was also achieved in September 1997, in the form of three instruments: the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management; the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage; and, finally, the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. These achievements are duly reflected in the draft resolution.

The technical cooperation activities of the Agency continue to play an important role in our efforts to achieve sustainable development in developing countries. The Agency's endeavours in the areas of isotope hydrology and potable water production continue to be noteworthy in this regard.

With regard to the Agency's implementation of Security Council resolutions on Iraq, we note with great concern that Iraq has not complied with all of the provisions of these resolutions. It is therefore quite important that the Agency continue its strenuous efforts to fulfil its mandate to identify, destroy, remove or render harmless the relevant materials, installations and equipment.

Finally, I should like to note that the draft resolution expresses its appreciation for 16 years of distinguished

service by Mr. Hans Blix as Director General of the Agency, noting that he will retire soon with the distinguished title of "Director General Emeritus of the International Atomic Energy Agency". It also extends its best wishes to the incoming Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei.

On behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, which now include the Marshall Islands, Albania, Estonia and Latvia, in addition to the 44 States listed in document A/52/L.13 before the Assembly, Japan is pleased to put this draft forward. My delegation believes that it reflects accurately the achievements of the Agency and represents the results of our collaborative work with our friends in Vienna and in New York to develop a text which can attract the greatest number of supporters. I sincerely hope that this draft resolution will be adopted with the broadest possible support.

Mr. Wolzfeld (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, as well as the associated country of Cyprus — associate themselves with this statement. The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country member of the European Economic Area, Norway, also aligns itself with this statement.

Today we are considering agenda item 14, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency". May I begin by expressing the European Union's gratitude for the extraordinary work carried out by the Agency during 1996 and the first part of 1997. This year's consideration of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report is a more solemn occasion than usual, first because we are celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Agency, the statute of which dates from 1957, and secondly because Mr. Hans Blix, the Agency's current Director General, is passing the baton to his successor, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, who will take office on 1 December 1997.

We again express our thanks to Mr. Blix, who is an old friend, and, through him, to all his staff for the remarkable work that has been accomplished over the past 16 years. We express our sincere congratulations to Mr. ElBaradei, a man of great experience, and take this opportunity to assure him of our full support in the fulfilment of his important functions.

The presentation of the annual report of the IAEA to the General Assembly provides us with the opportunity to review the Agency's work and to measure its results in the various fields in which it carries out its statutory functions. The European Union would like to comment on some of these areas of activity which, in 1996 and 1997, developed in specific and generally positive ways.

As far as nuclear non-proliferation is concerned, the European Union believes that all States must redouble their efforts to achieve three priority aims: the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), accession to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the swift conclusion of negotiations on a universal, non-discriminatory convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, which is referred to as the cut-off convention.

For the European Union, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime. We again welcome Brazil's declared intention to accede to it. We also welcome the significant decisions taken at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference with regard to the indefinite extension of the Treaty, the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and the strengthening of the review process of the Treaty. On the basis of the generally very constructive atmosphere in which work took place at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the next NPT Review Conference, to be held in the year 2000, the Union calls on all States to join it in taking that work forward at the Committee's next session. The Union continues to urge worldwide accession to the NPT. It reiterates its call to those States that have not yet done so, particularly those among them that operate nuclear facilities outside the IAEA safeguards system, to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible and without exception, and to conclude full-scope safeguards agreements with the IAEA.

The adoption and opening for signature in September 1996 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was in conformity with the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. This is the first of the measures in the programme of action, which will give full effect to the provisions of article VI of the NPT. Whether the future Organization will be set up within the time limits and in

the form specified in the Treaty will depend on the continued work of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization (CTBTO). The European Union attaches particular importance to universal accession to the Treaty and therefore calls on all States that have not yet signed — especially those on the list of 44 States whose ratification is needed for the Treaty to come into force — to do so as quickly as possible. We expect the development of the closest possible collaboration on administrative and logistical matters between the IAEA and the CTBTO once the latter has been set up.

The second measure under the action programme for implementing article VI of the NPT contained in the decision on principles and objectives concerns the early conclusion of a cut-off convention. The European Union again stresses its desire for an immediate start to and a swift conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. The European Union invites the Conference on Disarmament to set up as soon as possible an ad hoc committee to deal with this issue, in accordance with the statement of the Special Coordinator of the Conference on Disarmament and the mandate contained therein. We regret that this has not been done to date.

The third measure in the programme of action for implementing article VI of the NPT contained in the decision on principles and objectives relates to the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons as a whole and eventually to eliminate them, and the desire of all States to work for general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The European Union welcomes the progress made in this area. The entry into force of the START I Treaty and the forthcoming ratification of START II, which will clear the way for negotiations to begin between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on START III, as well as the considerable unilateral reductions that the United Kingdom and France have undertaken to make in their nuclear arsenals, are all highly significant steps.

For the European Union, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned is a factor for enhancing global and regional stability. We regard such zones as important elements that complement the NPT. The Union welcomes the zones established under the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Pelindaba and Rarotonga, as well as the efforts being made to give full effect to the Treaty of Bangkok with regard to a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. Furthermore, the Union has this year again signalled its interest in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia. Similarly, it continues to support efforts to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and of their delivery systems in that region. The Union notes that today all the States in the region, with one exception, have become parties to the NPT. It recalls the 1995 NPT Conference resolution calling upon all States in the Middle East that have not yet done so, without exception, to accede to the NPT as soon as possible and to make progress towards the establishment of such a zone.

Furthermore, the European Union welcomes the adoption, on 15 May 1997 by the Board of Governors, of the Model Protocol for the "93+2" programme. This programme aims to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system. It is intended to allow the detection of undeclared nuclear activities and will significantly increase the Agency's ability to enhance significantly its knowledge of nuclear programmes under way. The European Union thanks Ambassador Peter Walker and his colleagues on the Committee that the IAEA Board of Governors has entrusted with the task of drafting the Model Protocol for their speedy completion of their work. This Protocol is a model that opens up a new era in nuclear non-proliferation.

The European Union is determined to conclude an agreement on additional protocols with the IAEA in the near future. We call on all the other member States of the IAEA to match the determination of the European Union and ensure that the new additional protocols soon become a reality and are as universal as possible.

We wish to reiterate our conviction that nuclear export-control measures play an important role in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The right of each State under article IV of the NPT to develop its research in and production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes must be exercised in conformity with the non-proliferation obligations set out in articles I and II of the Treaty. The European Union, which has endorsed the IAEA's guidelines in document INFCIRC/254, renews its appeal to all exporting countries that have not yet done so to accept these guidelines and to establish effective national mechanisms for export control. Such mechanisms fit into

a broader framework of the adoption of responsible policies concerning transfers of sensitive materials, including the introduction of effective systems of export control. Control measures, which are a necessary corollary of peaceful nuclear cooperation, should be encouraged within the framework of an ongoing, fruitful dialogue among all interested States parties.

The European Union welcomes the programme for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in nuclear material adopted at the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit in April 1996, and awaits closer cooperation in the areas of prevention, detection, exchange of information, investigation and prosecution in cases of illicit trafficking. The European Union reiterates its appeal to all States to implement the programme. The Union welcomes the Agency's work in this area, particularly the fact that it has provided member States with a fully operational database, which is the authoritative source of information on incidents verified by member States, and that it has established an International Physical Protection Advisory Service to advise member States on how to improve their national nuclear-safety systems.

The physical protection of nuclear material is one of the key elements in the fight against illicit trafficking. The European Union reiterates its appeal to States that have not yet done so to place all their nuclear material under an effective protection system, in accordance with international guidelines, and to become parties to the 1980 Vienna Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. In this connection, it welcomes the Republic of Cuba's recent decision to accede to that Convention. We further note with satisfaction the work done by the parties concerned on guidelines for the management of civil plutonium. This is a significant complement to the Moscow Nuclear Summit Declaration of April 1996 on the safe and effective management of the fissile material of nuclear weapons identified as being no longer required for national defence purposes.

The European Union recalls that it attaches particular importance to the non-proliferation objectives of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). After deciding to provide initial assistance in the form of a contribution of ECU 5 million to KEDO in March 1996, the Union has sought ways of supporting it in a more lasting manner. The negotiations that were entered into with the founding members of KEDO led to the conclusion of an agreement providing for an annual contribution by the Union of up to ECU 15 million for a period of five years and European Union participation in the KEDO Executive Board.

The European Union continues to be concerned at the shortcomings in the implementation of the IAEA's agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the application of safeguards in the framework of the NPT. Similarly, it continues to be deeply concerned by the fact that to date the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not provided the Agency with the information it needs to verify that it has not diverted nuclear material to illicit uses and that its initial declaration is correct and complete. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's failure to cooperate with the Agency is inconsistent with the legal commitments to which that country subscribed in its agreement with the Agency on the application of safeguards in the framework of the NPT.

The European Union again appeals urgently to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to honour its safeguards commitments and to cooperate fully with the Director General of the IAEA. In this connection, as stated in the IAEA Director General's communication of 13 October 1997 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the European Union welcomes the holding of discussions between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Agency in Vienna and hopes that those talks will clear the way for a solution to the unresolved questions.

The European Union also commends the Director General of the Agency and his colleagues for their strenuous efforts to implement Security Council resolutions 687 (1991), 707 (1991), 715 (1991) and 1051 (1996) of 27 March 1996. We note that progress continues to be made in the review of the Full, Final and Complete Declaration Iraq is supposed to make on the definitive and complete status of its nuclear-weapon programme and that progress has also been made regarding the content and accuracy of Iraq's six-monthly declarations under the Ongoing Monitoring and Verification Plan.

We note with concern, however, that Iraq has still not provided the Agency's Action Team with all the information it has requested, and we deplore Iraq's refusal to allow the Agency to use an aeroplane in February 1997. We call upon Iraq to cooperate fully with the Agency's Action Team by responding to its requests for information and by fully implementing the relevant

Security Council resolutions and the Ongoing Monitoring and Verification Plan.

The European Union again stresses Iraq's obligation to hand over immediately to the Agency's Action Team any nuclear-weapon-related equipment, material and information it may still possess and to allow the Action Team immediate, unconditional and unrestricted right of access, in accordance with Security Council resolution 707 (1991). We stress that the IAEA Action Team will continue to exercise its rights under all relevant Security Council resolutions and in connection with any further relevant information that may come to light.

The Convention on Nuclear Safety entered into force on 24 October 1996. While recognizing that the primary responsibility for nuclear safety rests with the respective national Governments, the European Union welcomes the entry into force of this Convention, which was concluded under IAEA auspices and which will strengthen cooperation and mutual assistance in a favourable climate for the development a global nuclear-safety culture.

The preparatory meeting in April 1997 laid down the rules of procedure to be followed by the Contracting Parties at their periodic meetings to review the national reports. Those rules guarantee both an effective review of national reports and the transparency of the Contracting Parties' review procedure. The preparatory meeting also set guidelines for the form and structure of national safety reports and laid down financial rules.

The European Union calls on all States that have not yet done so, and especially those with nuclear facilities, to accede to this Convention at the earliest possible date, without exception.

The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, adopted by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on 5 September 1997, is another major step forward, from the standpoint both of the protection of humankind and the environment and of its impact on the public.

The European Union fully appreciates the fact that this Convention deals not only with the safe management of radioactive waste but also with the safe management of spent fuel, in a single joint legal instrument.

The European Union is convinced that the obligations embodied in this Convention reflect a culture of nuclear safety that is both responsible and of a high order. Likewise, the fact that the Convention also devotes a separate article to cross-border movements of nuclear materials is another noteworthy achievement.

It is the great hope of the European Union that the IAEA member States will regard the ratification or acceptance of this Convention as having at least the same importance and urgency as did the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

The European Union welcomes the outcome of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries held in Vienna from 8 to 12 September 1997, which adopted the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage.

The European Union has always been a driving force in the field of nuclear technological cooperation, at the multilateral and bilateral levels, and has given priority to cooperation with developing countries. Those countries will thus be able to benefit from nuclear technology applications, be it in the area of agriculture, epidemiology, industry, health or research, and such cooperation will contribute to their general development. The European Union approves in particular of the pilot projects that form part of the Agency's technical cooperation programme.

We applaud the fact that the Agency's cooperation projects are implemented with the greatest concern to meet high standards of quality and efficiency. We would call on all Member States and on the Agency itself to see to it that each one, according to its own means and capabilities, maintains or strengthens the current impetus.

The Nuclear Suppliers Group plays a key role in formulating directives on the export of nuclear or dual-use materials, equipment and technologies in the context of the development of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. To demonstrate its unequivocal commitment to international cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear technologies, the European Union actively participated in the organization of a seminar on Nuclear Suppliers Group transparency, to explain the Group's policy, the aim of which is to encourage the development of nuclear technology for peaceful uses, in particular by promoting transparency in nuclear export controls.

The responsibility for safe management of military fissile material lies in the first place with States

possessing nuclear arms. Other States and international organizations, however, may give their support as and when required. The European Union takes note with interest of the announcement made by the Russian Federation and the United States of America at the opening of the forty-first session of the General Conference of the IAEA, with regard to fissile material resulting from the dismantling of nuclear arms and identified as no longer being necessary for defence purposes. The European Union welcomes the efforts made to ensure the safe and protected storage of these materials in accordance with the relevant "voluntary offer" agreements on guarantees with the IAEA.

Last year the IAEA, the European Commission and the World Health Organization jointly sponsored an international conference to review the various technical and scientific assessments made to date, which will serve as the factual basis for all decisions on future work and cooperation. The European Union reiterates its pledge to provide financial assistance to the Ukrainian authorities so as to assist them in improving nuclear safety and security. We would recall here Ukraine's commitment to close down the Chernobyl nuclear installations by the year 2000.

The European Union is determined to continue to play a leading role in the strengthening of regulatory systems, through the establishment of, *inter alia*, the Nuclear Safety Account administered by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the G-24 coordinating mechanism; the European Union's PHARE and TACIS programmes; the EURATOM loan facility; coordinated support from financial institutions of the energy sector; and bilateral cooperation projects.

The European Union encourages States in their efforts to be made at the forthcoming International Pledging Conference on the Chernobyl Sarcophagus, to be held in New York, and notes with interest the forthcoming Special International Meeting on Chernobyl, also to be held in New York.

For a number of years the Agency's member States have been discussing whether to revise article VI of its statute. In this regard, the European Union would like to recall that resolution GC(40)/RES/20, adopted last year by the IAEA's General Conference, called for the submission of a finalized formula to the forty-first session of the General Conference in September 1997, in accordance with article XVIII of the IAEA's Statute. It notes with regret that the formula was not submitted in time to be considered. It also notes with interest the relevant provisions of resolution GC(41)/RES/20, adopted on 3 October 1997, which instructs the Board of Governors to set a timetable for submission of a finalized formula to the forty-second General Conference next year.

The European Union supports a balanced and lasting solution, with a certain increase in the number of Board members, while taking into account the need to preserve the Board's efficiency and effectiveness and redefining the criteria for appointing members, by giving each State the possibility of belonging to a regional group corresponding to its geographical region. A basic principle of justice dictates that no country can be automatically excluded from the possibility of sitting on the Board and that every country must have the possibility of being elected by a regional group.

This means that the European Union could have agreed to the proposal of the Chairman of the Board of Governors had it been adopted at the forty-first session of the Agency's General Conference. In our view, that proposal represents a compromise that would resolve the different issues relating to article VI of the Statute. It will continue to have our support until the issue has been finally settled.

While we welcome the extra-budgetary contributions from a number of Governments, the European Union would again urge all member States of the Agency to pay their assessed contributions promptly and in full to the regular budget, so that the Agency can fulfil all its tasks promptly and efficiently, according to a timetable that it has been able to establish in advance on a sound financial basis. It applauds the efforts of the Director General and his staff, who have again shown their professionalism and commitment to the aims of the Agency by concentrating on its priority activities and applying rigorous standards throughout the organization.

The European Union will vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.13, which has just been introduced by the representative of Japan, and it hopes that the General Assembly will be able to adopt it without a vote.

The President: I should like to propose that the list of speakers for the debate on this item be closed this morning at 11.45.

It was so decided.

The President: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate on this item to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible.

Mr. Crighton (Australia): First of all, I wish, on behalf of the Australian Government to thank the Director General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Agency, and, further, for his long, dedicated and effective leadership. We warmly congratulate his confirmed successor, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, and promise Australia's full support, as the Agency, following its fortieth anniversary, enters a new phase in its tasks of facilitating and verifying the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

More than two years have passed since the historic decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The principles and objectives adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference set out a programme of action containing elements both to reinforce nuclear non-proliferation and to take forward the commitment by all States to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. With 186 parties, there are now more parties to the Treaty than Member States of the United Nations. Australia continues to urge those few States that remain outside the Treaty to accede to it. In the meantime, States parties have made a constructive start to preparations for the Sixth Review Conference in the year 2000. In the course of their preparations, they will study the extent of implementation of the 1995 commitments.

The safeguards system is an integral element of the non-proliferation regime, and the strengthened safeguards regime is central to achieving the objectives of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. A highly developed Agency capacity to detect undeclared nuclear activity not only underpins much of nuclear usage today but will be the key to the eventual attainment of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Our goal should be the application of strengthened safeguards in all States.

In May, the IAEA Board of Governors approved a new Protocol for strengthening safeguards. The Protocol will enhance the IAEA's ability to detect undeclared nuclear activities. Thus, it supplements and extends the IAEA's existing safeguards agreements to increase assurances that States subject to comprehensive safeguards have declared all safeguardable nuclear activities. At the same time, it contains measures which enhance the IAEA's ability to detect undeclared nuclear activities, principally through new technical methods, such as environmental sampling techniques, extended access at nuclear sites, new access rights to nuclear-related sites and improved availability and analysis of nuclear-related information.

Consistent with Australia's traditional strong support for effective safeguards, Australia was an active participant in the negotiation of the Model Protocol. Indeed, Australia was pleased to be the very first member State to conclude and sign a bilateral Protocol with the Agency, incorporating the measures in the Protocol into our safeguards obligations. We welcome the subsequent signatures of the Protocol by a number of States.

However, to make the Protocol an operational reality, a priority for the new Director General and his staff must be to encourage States to adopt the Protocol. The Protocol represents the new standard for bilateral safeguards agreements with the IAEA. Accordingly, States should conclude their individual protocols with the IAEA as quickly as possible.

Australia sees the Agency's twin roles in technical cooperation and safeguards as part of the political compact between States which underpins the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Australia will maintain its support for the Technical Cooperation Fund next year to the amount of 1,289,000 Australian dollars and will continue to participate in the Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation.

We welcome the prominence of the Agency's Regional Cooperation Agreement for Asia and the Pacific (RCA) as a tool for promoting regional cooperation in the nuclear field. We are considering providing 1.5 million Australian dollars in extrabudgetary assistance for an RCA/IAEA project on the application of radio isotope technology to sustainable infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific. That will cover public sector engineering, strengthened radiation protection and regional education in nuclear medicine.

The planned state-of-the-art replacement for Australia's own research reactor will allow us to continue contributing to regional technology by providing access to a modern neutron source for researchers and students, not only in Australia but from the wider Asian region as well.

Safety is an essential consideration in the use of nuclear technology. Here, the Agency has also made new advances. Australia was an early signatory to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and has since proceeded to

ratification. We hope to sign the new Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management following the completion of consultations within our own federal system. On 1 October, we signed the new Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, which protects States which do not have nuclear power facilities but could be subjected to risk from the transboundary effects of a nuclear accident. Wide adherence to this Convention, together with transparency about transboundary shipments of radioactive materials, would do much, I think, to allay the well-known concern of the countries of the South Pacific about such shipments.

Nuclear power generation has expanded significantly in the East Asia region because it offers a source of energy to meet the rapidly increasing energy demands of the growing economies of the region. However, due attention to the highest standards of nuclear safety and transparency in the application of these standards is essential if nuclear power is to fulfil its potential to be a significant component of the energy mix in the Asian region.

The Asia-Pacific region is making nuclear safety a high priority. Japan hosted a conference on nuclear safety last year and the Republic of Korea hosted a very successful follow-up conference just last month. We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Governments of these two countries for this very important initiative. Australia hosted a regional workshop on nuclear safety culture this year and we are planning to follow up that workshop next year.

Australia has also taken the decision to restructure its radiation protection and nuclear safety agencies into an integrated body, a national radiation protection and nuclear safety agency, to regulate for best safety practice in Australia.

Another essential component of the non-proliferation regime is the system of nuclear export controls, such as those applied by the Nuclear Suppliers Group. These controls facilitate transfers consistent with peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They do not have a hidden agenda. Indeed, in the interests of transparency, all States were invited to a seminar on the role of export controls in nuclear non-proliferation following the recent IAEA General Conference. The seminar was well attended and offered ample opportunity for a full and frank exchange of views on the subject of export controls. Australia was pleased to have a prominent role in the organization of this seminar, which partially fulfilled the expectation at the NPT Review and Extension Conference that efforts would be made to explain better the operation of nuclear export controls and their contribution to nuclear non-proliferation to the international community.

In conclusion, the Agency has and will continue to have a heavy responsibility. In that context, while we welcome the functioning of the Agreed Framework between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we should all be concerned that little or no progress has been achieved on preserving information relevant to the history of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programme, prospectively undermining the Agency's capacity to fulfil its safeguards function in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It is also imperative to ensure that the past nuclear weapons programme of Iraq not be revived. We therefore place considerable significance on the Agency's monitoring of present activities in Iraq. In this context, we deplore Iraq's decision of 29 October 1997 not to cooperate with the United Nations Special Commission, the body in conjunction with which the IAEA must carry out its tasks in that country.

With these and other challenges, we urge the international community to pledge its support for the Agency by adhering to the legal instruments and continuing to provide the necessary human and financial resources to allow the Agency to carry out its mandated tasks.

Mrs. Sinha (India): The Indian delegation has taken note of the contents of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) presented by Director General Mr. Hans Blix.

The fortieth anniversary of the IAEA should be an occasion for introspection and charting future directions. We need to ensure that the original goals of the "Atoms for Peace" programme — the genesis of the IAEA — are maintained and promoted. The IAEA must promote the development of nuclear power in developing countries, where it would generally be the inevitable option exercised to satisfy future energy needs. In its fortieth year, the IAEA must ponder whether it has faltered in this task and in the process not retained the pioneering, scientific and technological position it once occupied. Insufficient proactive promotion by the IAEA of nuclear power as an important energy option to eliminate global poverty and to protect the global environment has led to

the predictable consequence of nuclear energy being referred to in a recent United Nations document only in the context of safety and non-proliferation.

The perception that nuclear power is on the downward slope is limited to the developed countries, where consumption patterns are already at extravagant levels and where the association in the minds of the public of nuclear power with nuclear weapons clouds their perception of the world's need for nuclear power generation. The real demand for nuclear power is in the developing countries, not only as an important energy option, but also as a catalyst for developing other high technologies. The problems of dwindling fossil reserves, as well as global warming, are too well known to bear repetition here. According to one study, if we are to retain carbon dioxide emissions at 1995 levels, then by the year 2050 nuclear power is likely to see a near fivefold increase globally. Indeed, it would be true to say that hampering growth in nuclear power is therefore equivalent to damage to the environment in the long run. The growth of nuclear energy in the foreseeable future will be in Asia: in the Republic of Korea and Japan now, and in India and China.

The doubt in some quarters about the need for nuclear expansion today comes from the surfeit of energy in developed countries, and the unfamiliarity with nuclear technology in most developing countries. The paramount requirement is that of making safety a part of the culture of nuclear technology and instilling it in every facet from design and development to the siting, construction and operation of facilities. It is here that the IAEA holds the greatest promise for rendering assistance to developing world member States, which constitute the majority of its members. The Agency must be a prime mover in ensuring that safety-related equipment and the free flow of information on research and development in safety-related issues is readily disseminated without being hindered by arbitrary export control regimes.

It is important to note that the global community needs to reckon with a given country's track record and potential for peaceful development of nuclear energy when assessing the nature of the technology and equipment flow to that country. Likewise, the Agency's safeguards are important and must be implemented by the Agency in accordance with Member States' agreements with it. The Agency should not become the spokesman for or take a role up-front in the propagation of political restraints which form the basis of safeguards. The hesitation stemming from unfamiliarity on the part of a developing country to initiate a nuclear power programme should not be compounded by fears about safety and by uneasiness about commitments under comprehensive safeguards agreements, as reinforced by programme "93+2".

The Agency must play a key role in removing such inhibitions of newcomers to the field of nuclear power. In the context of safeguards, we would like to refer to the adoption by a special meeting of the Board of Governors in May this year of a Model Additional Protocol, to be concluded between the Agency and member States which have comprehensive safeguards arrangements. This Protocol is intended to detect undeclared nuclear facilities in countries with comprehensive safeguards agreements, and obviously has no legal basis in countries which are not party to such agreements.

India has all along been keen to develop a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management and has associated itself with the Expert Group meetings and the recent diplomatic conference. While the original mandate given by the General Conference in 1994 was for developing a convention on the safety of radioactive waste management, spent fuel management has also been taken on board in this convention. We, who have a closed fuel cycle nuclear power programme, have consistently opposed the inclusion of spent fuel, which is a valuable resource material, along with radioactive waste in this convention. Any nation which is party to this convention but which regards spent fuel as a resource cannot be expected to have any obligation to report such resource material under the convention.

India has paid considerable attention to non-power applications, including those in nuclear medicine, agriculture and industry, as well as in isotope hydrology, pest control and potable water through desalination. We produce over 100 varieties of radioisotopes. We are very glad that the IAEA is also helping in the introduction of these applications in less developed countries. They are important, but should not overshadow the importance of nuclear power.

We are very happy to commemorate 25 years of the Regional Co-operative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology in Asia (RCA). The fledgling movement, which began as the India-Philippines Agency Project, and which has subsequently been nurtured into an agreement covering 17 countries, has served as a model for similar regional groupings in Africa and Latin America. It also provides a focus for technical cooperation between

developing countries. We seek to make independent programmes by supplementing and complementing the efforts of other agencies, like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and hope that the IAEA will be a benevolent catalyst in promoting the activities of the RCA. India has made substantial in-kind contributions of materials and manpower to this programme and will continue to do so in the future.

Technical cooperation should be an opportunity for germinating projects arising out of interaction between scientists of different nations. The IAEA used to be such a forum. A proper balance must be maintained between the promotional and regulatory activities. Technical cooperation funding must also be sufficient, assured and predictable. Human resource development is an important component of the technical cooperation activities, and the Agency should identify centres of excellence in the developing countries as part of technical cooperation between developing countries.

India is a donor country in technical cooperation. It has been our experience that in high technology areas developing countries find it easier to learn from one another than from developed countries, because of cultural and social similarities between them.

The rosy vision painted in the late 1950s of nuclear energy as a panacea for development and for power generation by 2000 has been realized only in part in the first four decades, and that too mostly in the developed countries. It must be recognized that the developing world cannot be denied the right to strive for a reasonable quality of life, which can be ensured in the future only through nuclear power. There is much that the IAEA can do to drive out pessimism, to encourage the growth of the nuclear-safety culture and to ensure that safeguards implementation does not inhibit technology development in the area of nuclear power. If these factors are given due attention, the IAEA will not only survive through the twenty-first century but will also become a major player in ushering in a new and great age for all humanity.

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The completion of Mr. Hans Blix's term of office at the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after 16 years of fruitful work is an opportunity for the Government of Mexico to express its appreciation for such an outstanding record, and it is also a fitting time to take stock of the work of the Agency.

The international conditions that prevailed when Mr. Hans Blix for the first time assumed the leadership of the IAEA have changed radically. With farsightedness and skill, Mr. Blix was able to convert the difficulties inherent in a constantly changing international context into opportunities to strengthen the Agency in its various areas of competence. Indeed, the Agency has had to resolve many difficulties in recent years in order to be in a position to respond to the expectations of its member States.

Under Mr. Blix's leadership, it was possible to establish a system of genuine international cooperation for the peaceful use of nuclear energy as a counterpart to the commitment by the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) not to acquire or in any way develop nuclear weapons. The report that we are considering today describes the application of nuclear energy to a broad range of peaceful activities for the benefit of agriculture and food, health, geology, physics, chemistry and the protection of the environment.

Mexico is pleased at the decision to confer upon Mr. Hans Blix the title of Director General Emeritus of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In paying tribute to this great friend of Mexico, I wish to welcome the new Director General of the IAEA, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, to whom we express our support and our confidence.

Mexico has always wanted the IAEA, in the fulfilment of its mandate, to maintain a vital balance between its security activities and those of cooperation and technical assistance for development. The IAEA has given us its cooperation. Among the most recent programmes that it has developed, I should like to emphasize the one on nuclear medicine, which will have a significant social and economic impact for the benefit of the country's scientific community and end users. The IAEA's training of Mexican scientists has made it possible for my country to cooperate in programmes to train foreign experts.

These are just a few examples of the association for development between the Agency and its member States that we have always advocated. The Regional Cooperative Arrangements for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America (ARCAL) have led to 12 projects that are now being implemented. But until we resolve the problem of financing activities in this field, these programmes will be at risk.

Respect for the balance to which I have referred is essential for a better implementation of the commitments that we have undertaken through the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the NPT and in general for confidence-building among Member States. Member States are establishing mechanisms to fulfil obligations derived from other treaties that prohibit weapons of mass destruction, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the strengthening of the regime established by the Convention on Biological Weapons. At the present time, the IAEA's experience could be a source of guidance to ensure the non-discriminatory application of all of the obligations assumed under these two instruments.

The year that is drawing to a close has seen important advances in the development of norms regarding a number of aspects of nuclear safety. Last September, we adopted the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. The competent authorities of the Mexican Government have already begun studies with a view to developing the secondary legislation that is required by this instrument in order to be able to sign it. The regime established by the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation was strengthened by the adoption of the Protocol to amend the Vienna Convention. My Government intends to sign this Protocol once certain internal legislative adjustments have been made.

Mexico, as a promoter of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone and in its capacity as depositary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, has followed with special interest the process referred to as "93+2". For this reason, we welcome the conclusion of the Model Additional Protocol to the safeguards agreements. The granting of broader authority to the IAEA must serve to buttress the existing non-proliferation regime. In this respect, it is of particular importance that the Model Additional Protocol is addressed to all Member States, regardless of the type of safeguards that they have with the IAEA. Mexico, of course, intends to sign a protocol on this issue with the Agency.

The IAEA is beginning a new stage in the strengthening of its activities. Requirements are emerging that stem from ever more varied applications of atomic energy, and more nuclear-weapon-free zones have been created. The Agency is also called upon to offer its know-how and experience to the future Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

The positive results of the IAEA's activities are reflected in the constant increase in the number of its members, as can be seen from the requests for admission from Malta and Burkina Faso. But representativity must also be reflected in the composition of the Board of Governors. Mexico supports the consultations that are under way to establish a mechanism that will allow the expansion, in a transparent manner, of the composition of the Board of Governors.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): My delegation thanks Mr. Hans Blix, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his comprehensive report on the activities of the Agency over the past year. We also pay tribute to him for his 16 years of dedicated service as Director General of the Agency. During his long stewardship he set an example of how effectively and efficiently an international organization can be run. We hope that the international community can continue to draw on his experience and wisdom even after his retirement at the end of this month. We also congratulate Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei on his appointment as the next Director General, and pledge the full support and cooperation of my Government as he steers the Agency into the next millennium.

The IAEA celebrated its fortieth anniversary this year. Over the past four decades the Agency has made a unique contribution to peace and to the well-being of humanity. The Agency's activities in setting international standards for nuclear safety and radioactive-waste management have been crucial in strengthening public confidence in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. At a time when the international community is struggling to deal with the problems of environmental degradation resulting from the excessive use of fossil fuel, the Agency's achievements in the area of nuclear safety underline the merits of nuclear energy as the most feasible and attractive alternative to fossil fuel. Thanks to its technical cooperation programmes, know-how relating to nuclear applications in such diverse areas as agriculture, health, industry and water-resources management is now available to a growing number of developing countries. The Agency is also playing an indispensable role in building a safer world free from the threat of nuclear proliferation, through its safeguards activities under the mandate of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and under Security Council resolutions.

Let me now touch on some of the Agency's activities to which my Government attaches particular importance. The Republic of Korea welcomes the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management at the diplomatic conference held last September in Vienna under the auspices of the IAEA. The adoption of this long-awaited Convention will greatly contribute to the protection of people and the environment from the potential hazards of spent fuel and radioactive waste. Being one of the first countries to sign the Joint Convention, we urge those countries which have not yet done so to sign it without delay, and we look forward to its early entry into force.

The recent adoption of the Protocol to amend the 1963 Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage should also be welcomed as another important insurance policy for nuclear safety. Together with the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety in October 1996 and the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, these two new instruments in the field of nuclear liability will further facilitate the expansion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by enhancing an international safety culture and helping to dispel any lingering public misgivings about nuclear safety.

My Government has consistently supported the Agency's efforts since 1992 to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of its safeguards system within the context of programme "93+2". We are pleased to note that these efforts led finally to the adoption last May at a special meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors of a model protocol additional to safeguards agreements. We welcome this important achievement and will duly incorporate the provisions of the model protocol into our national laws and regulations for prompt implementation. We believe that the strengthening of the safeguards system will enhance the Agency's capability not only to detect diversions of nuclear material from declared facilities, but also to detect undeclared nuclear activities. As such, it will strengthen the credibility of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

As a practical step to support and supplement the Agency's own strengthened safeguards system at the domestic level, the Republic of Korea enacted a national inspection system in August this year. We expect that this system will facilitate the Agency's safeguards activities and thus further enhance the transparency of nuclear activities in my country.

Let me now turn to the long-standing North Korean nuclear issue. Despite the enormous time and effort devoted by the Agency over the past several years to ensure North Korea's compliance with its safeguards obligations, North Korea's refusal to come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA continues unabated. The light-water reactor project undertaken under the auspices of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization is proceeding smoothly, but no progress has yet been forthcoming in the Agency's three-year effort to preserve the information relevant to North Korea's past nuclear activities pending its full compliance, as mandated by the Security Council in November 1994. We fully share the serious concern already expressed in this regard by the representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union and by the representative of Australia. This is indeed a matter of serious concern not only to my Government but to the international community as a whole, as North Korea's lack of cooperation with the Agency in preserving the relevant information could cause serious difficulties for the light-water reactor project that is under way. Under the terms of the Agreed Framework between the United States and North Korea, the light-water reactor project's completion is predicated on the Agency's verification of the correctness and completeness of Pyongyang's initial report, which will be impossible without the preservation of the information required by the Agency. We hope that the DPRK will fully realize the consequences of its continuing non-cooperation with the Agency and will act accordingly without further delay.

It must be emphasized again that the ultimate resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue will be possible only when Pyongyang faithfully abides by both its multilateral and its bilateral non-proliferation commitments under the NPT, the Agreed Framework and the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula signed by South and North Korea in 1991.

The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to the work of the IAEA. In his statement this morning, Mr. Hans Blix of the IAEA spoke at length about the merits of nuclear energy. In my country, there are currently 12 power stations in operation with a combined capacity of more than 10,000 megawatts. If the amount of energy currently supplied by those power reactors were to be met by oil-fuelled power plants, it would each year add nearly 45 million tons of carbon dioxide to our already polluted air and $2 billion to our existing trade

deficit as a result of the 14 million tons of additional petroleum imports which would be required.

Under a long-term nuclear development plan finalized last July, my Government plans to build 15 more power reactors by the year 2010. We plan to invest $7 billion over the next 13 years in nuclear research and development programmes. These programmes include, among other things, the development of small-and medium-capacity multi-purpose power reactors which can also be used for seawater desalination and heating, as well as the development of advanced next-generation reactor and fusion technology. Korea also assigns a high priority to expanding applications of nuclear energy in the industrial, medical and agricultural fields.

In the twenty-first century, the Asia-Pacific region is expected to become the most active in the world in the use and development of nuclear energy. We therefore attach particular importance to nuclear cooperation among the Asia-Pacific countries, particularly in the field of nuclear safety.

The Seoul Conference on Nuclear Safety in Asia, which we hosted on 30 October 1997, is a concrete manifestation of our interest in playing a meaningful role in this regard. We will soon open an international nuclear training centre in Korea, with a view to sharing know-how in the peaceful applications of nuclear energy with other interested countries.

Finally, I reiterate my Government's firm commitment to the goals of the IAEA and pledge our full support to the Agency's efforts to build a more prosperous and peaceful world. It is our sincere wish that the draft resolution before the General Assembly will enjoy the unanimous support of Member States.

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Our delegation is grateful to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Hans Blix, for his introduction of the Agency's annual report, which provides a very detailed description of IAEA activities.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported the activities of the IAEA. The Agency justifiably has a strong reputation for generating ideas and initiating practical actions aimed at enhancing nuclear safety and security by undertaking the dual functions of strengthening the international non-proliferation regime and developing peaceful cooperation in the use of atomic energy.

The international community has recently made substantial progress in ensuring global and regional security. An indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995 was a most important positive development in this regard. Under these circumstances, the comprehensive strengthening of the non-proliferation regime becomes all the more relevant.

Russia, as one of the NPT depositary States, unequivocally confirms the steadfastness of its position in respect of the principles contained in the Treaty. We oppose attempts to revise the Treaty, which has effectively prevented the dissemination of nuclear weapons throughout our planet for more than a quarter of a century.

We consider it to be of great importance in this context to start negotiations, within the Conference on Disarmament, on a non-discriminatory and universal multilateral agreement on the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. It is well known that Russia has already halted the production of weapon-grade uranium. A national programme to stop the production of weapon-grade plutonium will be implemented in 1998.

A new initiative put forward by Russia's President Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin in his address to the fortieth anniversary session of the IAEA General Conference provided further evidence that our words and our deeds are consistent. The decision gradually to remove up to 500 tons of highly enriched uranium and up to 50 tons of weapon-grade plutonium from nuclear military programmes was an effective practical contribution by Russia to making nuclear disarmament irreversible.

The trilateral initiative put forward by the Minister for Atomic Energy of Russia, the Secretary of Energy of the United States and the Director General of IAEA concerning the application of the Agency's verification procedures to weapon-grade fissile material had an important part in the efforts made in this area. The objective of this initiative was to fulfil the obligations assumed by the Presidents of the two countries with regard to applying IAEA verification procedures and to making the reductions in nuclear weapons transparent and irreversible. In 1996, the parties established a joint group to consider technological, legal and financial aspects of the application of IAEA verification procedures to such fissile material.

Russia consistently supports IAEA activities aimed at improving the system of safeguards. Verification activities of the Agency should continue to be a priority, making it possible to conduct a technically precise, politically impartial and legally indisputable analysis of the nature of nuclear activities carried out by non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT.

Strengthening the non-proliferation regime and assuring nuclear safety and security also presuppose the effective elimination of illegal trafficking in nuclear material.

We are convinced that one of the Agency's primary purposes should be to ensure the viability of nuclear power as one of the basic conditions for meeting the world community's demand for energy.

In our view, on the eve of the twenty-first century, the Agency could begin to elaborate a comprehensive strategy on the development of nuclear power. First, it would be based on meeting safely the growing requirements of an increasingly interdependent world for electric power in the short term. Secondly, it would seek to ensure the strategic security and reliability of electric power generation in a longer-term perspective. And thirdly, it would undertake the task of reducing the threat of global climate change on the planet, caused, *inter alia*, by the constantly growing electric power production at standard thermal power plants.

Russia regards the exploitation of the enormous scientific and technical potential, formerly the exclusive prerogative of military programmes, as one of the areas for the development of nuclear energy related to the reduction and utilization of nuclear weapons. We see the role of the Agency here as one of coordinating international cooperation with a view to choosing an economically sound and environmentally safe use of weapon-grade material in a civilian nuclear fuel cycle.

The future of nuclear power is inseparably linked to the need to meet ever growing safety requirements. The Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security made a major contribution to the solution of this entire range of problems. We think it important to continue the positive initiatives contained in the Moscow agreements. We are glad to note that the IAEA has begun to play a bigger role in ensuring nuclear safety and security.

The establishment of international legal mechanisms for regulating nuclear activities has been continuing with the Agency's active involvement. One incontrovertible achievement in this field was the elaboration and adoption of the international Convention on Nuclear Safety. The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management was also developed under IAEA auspices. With the IAEA's assistance, we should now consolidate an entirely new international trend — that of transforming the atom from a factor of divisiveness, deterrence and confrontation into one of partnership, interaction and peace.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): Allow me to begin by expressing the gratitude of the Government of the Republic of Armenia for the important work carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during 1996 and the first part of 1997. We commend the Director General, Mr. Hans Blix, and the secretariat and staff of the Agency for their commitment and professionalism in delivering an expanded programme within resource constraints.

The presentation by the IAEA of its annual report to the General Assembly provides us with the valuable opportunity to review the work which the Agency has done and to measure the impact of its activities in the various fields in which it operates in accordance with its statutory functions.

For the past 40 years the international community has relied on the IAEA as the key organization in preventing nuclear weapons proliferation and in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We have also witnessed the IAEA's unique role in establishing an international legal system, standards and norms to ensure the safe use of nuclear energy. Armenia applauds the progress achieved by the IAEA in preparing these legal bases in the form of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and the Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage.

Today we would like to commend the Agency once again for its invaluable help in the reactivation of one unit of the Armenian nuclear power plant at Medzamor, and for providing ongoing support and technical assistance to ensure its safe operation.

After independence, the establishment of a viable national energy system was among the most challenging tasks faced by the Armenian Government. Being

absolutely reliant on geographically remote suppliers of conventional energy, the country was subjected to a heavy energy blockade by neighbouring Azerbaijan and Turkey and as a result found itself in a deep energy crisis, which forced it to operate the Medzamor nuclear power plant again. This decision was made with full acknowledgment by the Government of its responsibility to guarantee the safe operation of the plant.

We give absolute priority to the safety of our peaceful nuclear energy programme and seek to observe and implement the IAEA guidelines and policies, whether they relate to the safe operation of our nuclear industry, or to the readiness to provide all required information and address the concerns of neighbouring countries.

As a non-nuclear weapon State developing peaceful nuclear energy, Armenia attaches great importance to the issue of international compliance with nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament objectives and obligations. We reaffirm our commitment to full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and firmly support the IAEA programme on strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system. In this respect, I would also like to recall the fact that on 29 September 1997 Armenia signed the additional protocol to its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA.

We welcome the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. It is our strong conviction that these Conventions will facilitate international safety cooperation and provide increased compensation for victims in the event of a nuclear accident.

Armenia is making progress in other important directions with regard to its peaceful nuclear energy programme. We are currently drafting the legal basis for the programme and developing inter-agency consensus to expedite its processing by the legislative branch. In September 1997 a draft law, entitled "On Nuclear Energy Utilization for Peaceful Purposes", was submitted to the National Assembly for approval. Armenia is willing to continue its cooperation with leading international consultants in the field, such as the International Legal Group, which functions under the auspices of the IAEA. We also appreciate the assistance provided by Sweden in the field of nuclear energy use.

To meet its international obligations and regulate the sphere of nuclear energy use, the Armenian Government has established a National Nuclear Regulatory Authority, which has already been able to develop close relationships with related international organizations and national regulatory bodies. As a national coordinator of technical cooperation programmes, the Authority steers the activity of Armenia's agencies and centres participating in the eight national and 17 regional programmes under the auspices of the IAEA.

Currently Armenia and the IAEA are working on the development of programmes of technical cooperation for the period between 1998 and 2000, and are involved in a substantive dialogue and consultation on efficient planning, implementation and review of the cooperation projects. We will soon submit to the Agency the new set of technical cooperation proposals for the next implementation period.

Under the aegis of the IAEA, the National Nuclear Regulatory Authority closely cooperates with its partner regulatory bodies of the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, the United States, Russia, Argentina and others. This cooperation includes joint projects on nuclear safety research and development, exchange of technical information relating to safety issues and the environmental impact of nuclear energy facilities, licensing and regulation of reactor safety research and operating experience.

We fully associate ourselves with the views of the Director General regarding the dramatic environmental and humanitarian consequences of the accelerated use of fossil fuel. Considering the increasing environmental cost to society of wastes from burnt fossil fuels and the risk of global warming, we believe in safe and peaceful nuclear energy as a cost-effective and clean source of energy for the future.

Countries with limited mineral resources, like Armenia, will continue to view the International Atomic Energy Agency as the central medium for the safeguarded transfer of nuclear technology, operational expertise, and technical assistance to countries which explicitly adhere to international non-proliferation objectives and comply with the existing regulations.

The fundamental changes in international security have helped reduce the threat of global confrontation. However, the emerging environment has brought about new security concerns and challenges that arise from regional competition, the threat of nuclear, bacteriological and chemical proliferation and organized and individual terrorism. At the global level, these challenges have become more asymmetrical, and therefore more difficult to cope with. The active engagement of all responsible members of the international community is vital to address these challenges and to advance our common safety, non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament goals.

In conclusion, I would like to once again pay tribute to Mr. Hans Blix for the dedication with which he has conducted the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency throughout his 16 years of distinguished service as its Director General. I also wish to take this opportunity to extend our best wishes for success to the incoming Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, and to assure him of our support and cooperation.

Mr. Marrero (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, I would like to commend the Director General for his report and take this opportunity to congratulate him on 16 years of outstanding service at the helm of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As the President of the United States said in his message to this year's session of the General Conference,

> "in no small measure, the excellence, commitment and creativity of the IAEA has been exemplified and fostered by outgoing Director General Hans Blix".

I also want to welcome Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei as the new Director General, and pledge our support to him as we work together in pursuit of the IAEA's vital objectives.

Over the years the IAEA has committed itself to a diverse set of programmes that enhance the security, health, environment and safety of the international community. It has done so with distinction. The IAEA achievements reflected in the Director General's report demonstrate the critical role of the Agency in encouraging cooperation in the many important peaceful uses of nuclear material and technology under sound non-proliferation conditions. The Agency's safeguards system performs the essential function of verifying compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other non-proliferation treaties. The United States welcomes the international agreement of last May to strengthen the safeguards system, and strongly supports continued efforts to bring the agreed new safeguards measures quickly into effect.

Integral to all of the Agency's programmes is the commitment to nuclear safety. Safety considerations are at the heart of every IAEA technical cooperation project. Training programmes emphasize safety. Operational safety review teams promote safety in all aspects. The Convention on Nuclear Safety embodies the commitment of its signatories to safety. The United States welcomes the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and the resolution on the Chernobyl sarcophagus adopted at this year's General Conference, as further commitment to nuclear safety. The United States reaffirms its commitment to the Agency's work in nuclear safety and our commitment to strengthening further this important endeavour.

The United States would also like to commend the Agency's continued efforts to implement the United Nations Security Council resolutions with regard to Iraq. We believe that Iraq is continuing to withhold information from the Agency. We understand the Agency's desire to focus more on building a long-term monitoring regime in Iraq. We call on Iraq to provide a complete accounting of its nuclear weapons programme and respond to all IAEA requests for information.

The United States also would like to thank the IAEA for its devoted efforts to ensure the safeguarding of the world's nuclear material. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's lack of cooperation with the IAEA is of concern to the United States. We encourage the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to work with the Agency towards full compliance with its safeguards agreement and, in the interim, take all steps the IAEA deems necessary to preserve all information relevant to verifying the accuracy and completeness of its initial report of the inventory of nuclear material subject to the safeguards.

The programme for combating illicit trafficking in nuclear material underscores the need for improved cooperative efforts in monitoring nuclear materials. Again, the Agency has taken this opportunity to distinguish itself as a leader in this effort.

The United States wishes to reiterate its continued support for the technical cooperation programme. As the major contributor to this valuable programme we recognize its importance for promoting the quality of

human life in many countries. The diversity of the benefits and projects undertaken in the technical cooperation programme provides the world with a better understanding of how nuclear materials can be used to solve a variety of issues in medicine, health, agriculture and basic industry. Thus it continues to assist in shaping the vision for the peaceful uses of nuclear material for the future.

Again, on behalf of the United States, I would like to thank Mr. Blix for his report and for his many years of most distinguished service, and to wish him well in his future endeavours. The United States looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the Agency, recognizing the importance of this valuable asset to the security of the world and its people.

Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegations of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) countries — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and Bolivia and Chile, which are associated States, express their satisfaction at the detailed and well-balanced report presented by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Hans Blix.

This year is the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1145 (XII), which established the relationship between the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and this Organization. The commendable work of the IAEA in promoting the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy deserves to be mentioned once again. The progress achieved in terms of both international cooperation and the application of safeguards is extremely relevant to MERCOSUR countries. Furthermore, our countries are gratified that the General Conference of the Agency has considered the first acceptances by various States of the Additional Protocol prepared in the framework of programme "93+2", which supplements existing safeguards agreements.

One sphere of IAEA action that our countries are following with great interest is that of the technical and scientific evaluations conducted in recent years. In this respect, we welcome the holding of the International Conference on the Consequences of the Chernobyl Accident, 10 years after the tragic event. Major conclusions were drawn from the Conference in terms of the physical and psychological effects on the population and on environmental aspects.

We also would like to express our pleasure at the results of two diplomatic conferences on the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management and the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. These contributions are a clear commitment on the part of the international community to updating and strengthening international standards that regulate the different aspects of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco this year coincides with the celebration of the first five years of operation of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC). This Agency has successfully fulfilled its commitment to establish a verification system in accordance with the quadripartite safeguards agreement which has led to fruitful interaction between the ABACC and the IAEA. Nevertheless, the ABACC intends to continue its efforts to improve this interaction. In this connection, it recently concluded the negotiation of an agreement between the ABACC and the IAEA on cooperation between the two agencies. This agreement will serve to recognize the increasing maturity of the ABACC and contribute to the steadily growing coordination of the work of the two agencies in order to make the provisions of the quadripartite agreement more effective.

As regards technical cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, we are involved in the process of updating and modernizing what is known as the ARCAL programme, which provides a vehicle for cooperation in our region. Likewise, and in the framework of this programme, we are about to consider a draft governmental agreement which, if adopted, will serve as a framework for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in Latin America.

In conclusion, we would like, once again, to express our appreciation of the comprehensive report of the Director General of the IAEA and we reaffirm the commitment of our countries to the objectives of the Agency.

Mr. Rider (New Zealand): This has been a special year for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). At the time of its fortieth anniversary we had the opportunity to look back on the Agency's very considerable achievements since 1957 and look forward to the future. In New Zealand's view, the IAEA has established itself over that period as a leading multilateral

institution, and one which makes an extremely valuable contribution to the international community.

Today, though, we are only looking back over the past year. As always, it has been a busy one for the Agency, its staff and member States. It has also been the first year New Zealand has served as a member of the Agency's Board of Governors, with the support of our colleagues in the South-East Asia and Pacific regional group. We sought election to the Board in recognition of the fact that the Agency's non-proliferation and other activities are of increasing relevance to all countries, including those like New Zealand, without major nuclear industries. We are proud to have worked with the Agency, and we look forward to continuing a very productive association.

The report in document A/52/285, introduced earlier this morning by Mr. Blix, the Agency's Director General, reflects fairly the wide range of issues that have been the focus of the Agency's attention over the past year. I would like to talk a little about these activities.

One aspect of the IAEA's effort to which New Zealand attaches special importance is its work in the implementation of the safeguards provisions. These derive from several sources, most notably the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. But other international treaties, conventions and agreements achieve similar objectives. In our own part of the world the South Pacific Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty provides for the application of IAEA safeguards. Other nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties do likewise.

The IAEA's role in applying these safeguards is of critical importance in maintaining the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. The reassurance provided by the work of the Agency in this regard also provides a foundation for efforts for nuclear disarmament.

New Zealand therefore warmly welcomes the development of the Model Additional Protocol. We were active in the negotiations on this instrument, and were very pleased with the outcome. We are confident the Model Additional Protocol will greatly enhance the Agency's ability to detect undeclared nuclear activities. Events in recent years have shown that there will always be a need for vigilance, and we are pleased that the Agency's powers have been extended in this way.

New Zealand is in the process of undertaking the domestic consultation required for us to conclude the Protocol. We would urge all other countries to implement the Protocol as soon as possible. In our view, this is one of the most important contributions any country can make to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

There is much else which the Agency has achieved over the past year that New Zealand would warmly commend. We would highlight here, amongst other things, its efforts in support of the prevention of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources. The appearance of non-State actors with an interest in nuclear technology is a worrying trend, and we are pleased that the Agency is contributing to efforts to ensure that nuclear material does not fall into the wrong hands. Unfortunately, we can see that this is likely to be a growth area of work in the future.

New Zealand is also very supportive of the Agency for its continuing and impartial efforts in respect of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As a member of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), New Zealand welcomes the IAEA's continued monitoring of the freeze under the Agreed Framework. However, New Zealand remains deeply concerned at the lack of progress in the implementation of the safeguards agreement with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and we reiterate our calls for that country to return to full compliance with the safeguards agreement. That is the expectation of the international community.

Similarly, New Zealand is fully supportive of the Agency's endeavours in respect of Iraq. In that connection, I would like to take this opportunity to note that New Zealand is very concerned about recent developments in Iraq, as reflected in operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution before us [A/52/L.13], which New Zealand has co-sponsored. The Special Commission must be allowed to continue its work without hindrance.

Finally, I have pleasure in joining with other speakers in paying tribute to Mr. Hans Blix, who has headed the Agency for the past 16 years. We owe Mr. Blix an immense debt of gratitude for his leadership, his wisdom and his guidance. New Zealand looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the Agency, which we value so highly, under the incoming Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei. We are confident that under Mr. ElBaradei the Agency will be well placed indeed to meet the challenges that it will continue to face over the coming years.

Mr. Jusys (Lithuania): It is a special honour and pleasure for the Lithuanian delegation to wish the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) a happy fortieth anniversary. The Agency has reached its golden age, in which mature wisdom and youthful energy make it the organization that it is — a unique, effective and respectable world institution. We feel rightly proud to be among its members.

We owe a special and sincere tribute to the outgoing Director General, Mr. Hans Blix. If we have anyone to thank for the Agency's growing international authority, it is Mr. Blix. We wish the incoming Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, success in building on Mr. Blix's 16-year legacy, and we pledge our full support for his future endeavours.

I would like to thank the leadership of the IAEA for the comprehensive report on its accomplishments in 1996 and the additional information provided by the Director General. We note a number of important resolutions adopted during the recent General Conference of the Agency in its forty-first regular session.

For Lithuania, atomic energy is the focus of the highest national interest. We have associated ourselves with the European Union statement, which outlines the main thrust of our thoughts concerning this agenda item. I am here today to underline the specifics of the issue from a Lithuanian perspective.

The proportion of nuclear energy production to total energy production in Lithuania is today is the highest in the world. Last year nuclear energy production was 84 per cent of total produced energy. Nuclear energy is produced in one of the world's most powerful nuclear plants, located near Ignalina in north-eastern Lithuania. Naturally, the safety of the plant has been of primary importance to us.

Due to the transparency policy adhered to by the Lithuanian Government, international experts know everything about the plant's two reactors. As a result, the safety analysis report completed last year by the international consortium of experts became the first comprehensive document on safety for the light boiling water cooled graphite moderated pressure tube (RBMK) reactors.

Another fuse in the safety of the Ignalina plant is the knowledge, training and professionalism of those who operate it. Our experts have greatly benefitted from the IAEA technical cooperation programme and other bilateral programmes. Two weeks ago the Lithuanian Government submitted a draft law on the management of the Ignalina plant to the Parliament. It will be a modern Western-type structure of governance designed by the IAEA utilization safety mission, in cooperation with the Ignalina Safety Jury, set up under an agreement between the Lithuanian Government and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Since nuclear safety concerns everyone, the Lithuania Government has developed programmes of public awareness and civil defence preparedness. Several weeks ago Lithuania signed a multilateral memorandum on technical cooperation with the IAEA on preparedness for nuclear emergencies. This action will help to handle nuclear accidents, ensure that timely information is sent to and received from the international community and introduce additional safety measures.

Based on all the precautionary measures we have taken with the help of our Western partners, particularly Sweden, the Ignalina nuclear power plant is now one of the safest plants in the world with RBMK-type reactors.

National nuclear safety measures must always be aligned with international mechanisms that are instituted by and operate under relevant international agreements. Lithuania is a party to many of these agreements. It is encouraging to see the increasing strength and growing number of such mechanisms.

A year ago the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which Lithuania has ratified, entered into force. Today the Convention is more operational, due to new rules of procedure whereby all States must submit national reports for review. We are preparing our report for the first review meeting to be held in the spring of 1999.

Other important landmarks in international nuclear safety include the adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. Lithuania was among the first signatories to these major instruments. And we especially welcome the signature of our neighbour, the Republic of Belarus, to the Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage.

Today the most significant challenge faced by Lithuania and other States that utilize nuclear energy is the interim storage and final repository of spent fuel. This challenge must be tackled through the coordinated

cooperation of all countries concerned. The timely adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management will greatly aid the effort. Not only did the Joint Convention come at the right time, but, more important, it is a comprehensive and verifiable convention. Lithuania was among the first signatories to this Convention as well.

The IAEA already has programmes in place for the management of radioactive waste originating from medicine, industry and agriculture. It is high time a similar programme was designed for the very core of the issue: spent nuclear fuel.

The spent nuclear fuel issue is also an international security issue. If unaccounted for, this fuel can fall into the wrong hands. We often talk about new security threats, whether intentional or accidental, which States must prevent through national measures. Lithuania has a special authority for nuclear energy safety which accounts for and controls all nuclear material, the bulk of which is spent nuclear fuel.

Without international cooperation and mechanisms, no State can achieve the safety of nuclear material on its own. We acceded to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials in 1994 and implemented it through national measures in accordance with all relevant international standards.

What is worse than uncontrolled nuclear waste is when nuclear material falls into the hands of those who might use it to threaten other States. In an effort to track nuclear material, we support the operation of the IAEA database on illicit traffic incidents as well as the International Physical Protection Advisory Service. We also welcome reconfirmation by the world's major Powers at the G-8 Denver Summit this June that they will fight this dangerous trafficking of nuclear material.

The IAEA is essential to nuclear disarmament. None of the relevant treaties would be effective without input from the Agency. In fact, without the IAEA, there would hardly be any progress in nuclear disarmament.

The Agency's verification expertise is crucial to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of nuclear weapons control. The IAEA is critical to the maintenance of the nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty Organization will need to rely on the IAEA. If we succeed in taking the next logical step and negotiate the fissile material cut-off treaty, the IAEA will surely have an important role in guiding efforts to ensure the effectiveness of that treaty as well.

Last year we felt safer when the Agency reported that no declared and safeguarded nuclear material had been diverted for any military or unknown purpose. It is regrettable, however, that some States still remain outside the NPT regime and IAEA safeguards. And it is worrisome that some States have safeguards agreements in force with the IAEA but do not enforce them, and are, in fact, under no safeguards surveillance.

There had been some progress in the case of Iraq. But recent actions by the Iraqi authorities leave nothing but the hope of its compliance with the Security Council resolutions. It must allow the experts from the IAEA and the United Nations Special Commission to inspect its facilities. If Iraq and other States have nothing to hide, then they should avoid taking actions that arouse suspicions of their covert activities.

The system of safeguards needs to be enhanced horizontally and vertically. The progress in the latter dimension is evident. The Model Additional Protocol for the application of the IAEA safeguards was relatively quickly adopted by the Board of Governors on 15 May 1997. We are ready to sign an Additional Protocol, which is in addition to the agreement we have with the IAEA for the application of safeguards signed in 1992. As a first step, Lithuania has allowed visa-free entry to the Agency's inspectors.

There will most likely be many more ways for the IAEA to contribute to the goal of the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. As natural resources are diminished and the supply of nuclear fuel may come from dismantled warheads, the IAEA is a link between disarmament and development.

The contribution of the IAEA extends further than nuclear disarmament and the development of nuclear energy. The Agency commendably contributes to the progress of medicine, agriculture and other applicable sciences.

The atom is one of the most environmentally friendly sources of energy in spite of the risks associated with its use, all of which can be dealt with successfully. If we are to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, what other way is there but to rely on nuclear energy? We can

all agree with what Mr. Blix said at the special session of the General Assembly on 24 June:

> "Nuclear power, rather than being largely ignored or written off by reference to public concerns, would deserve to be examined on its merits by United Nations organs in search of a sustainable energy mix." [*Official Records of the General Assembly, Nineteenth special session, 3rd plenary meeting*, p. 33]

Finally, the draft resolution introduced by the representative of Japan, Ambassador Owada, adequately reflects the current situation and prospects of IAEA activities. We wish to see it adopted by consensus.

Mr. Zaki (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation would like to convey its appreciation to the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for his statement this morning on the annual report of the Agency for 1996. I would also like to convey our compliments to the Agency for completing 40 years of useful work. We hope that in the future the Agency will pay greater attention to the needs of developing countries to benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Pakistan, as one of the founding members of the International Atomic Energy Agency, can take justifiable pride in its close association and fruitful cooperation with the Agency since its establishment in 1957. During the past four decades, Pakistan has both benefited from and contributed to the work of the Agency.

Pakistan has participated actively in the Agency's policy-making organs, served for 24 years on its Board of Governors and was twice elected as its Chairman. Additionally, Pakistan has the honour of serving as the first Chairman of the Agency's Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation.

Today, Pakistan provides an outstanding example of the IAEA's success story in the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Thanks to the catalytic effect of the Agency's cooperation, the peaceful nuclear programme of Pakistan has considerably advanced, having a significant socio-economic impact.

While supplementing our own efforts and resources with IAEA's technical assistance, we have established a broad base of professional manpower, research institutes, training facilities, medical centres and other technical services. We now have three centres specializing in the use of radiation and radioisotopes in agriculture. An institute of biotechnology and genetic engineering is dedicated to research. Ten nuclear medical centres cater to a quarter-million patients every year, while two more centres are under construction.

It is a source of great satisfaction for us to have supported the Agency's promotional activities. Despite our meagre resources, we have freely shared our experience in peaceful nuclear technology with other developing countries by providing experts, offering placements in concerned institutions and hosting training courses. We will continue our contributions in these areas.

Pakistan shares the aspirations of the international community to a nuclear-weapon-free world. Experience has shown that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a positive and significant step forward in that direction. Our proposal, initiated in 1974, for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia continues to demonstrate our commitment to seek peaceful modalities and agreements to promote the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in our region. The proposal is part of our endeavour to promote a comprehensive approach to resolving problems in South Asia, including the resolution of disputes and issues of security.

Because of the existing tensions in our region, the problem of nuclear proliferation raises serious concerns. The core cause of tension in South Asia is the Kashmir dispute and the brutal suppression and the denial of the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people. The only viable way to reduce this tension is to resolve the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations Security Council's resolutions. The reduction of tension is likely to reduce the risk of nuclear proliferation in our region and will hopefully contribute to promoting the objective of non-proliferation.

In the context of non-proliferation, the IAEA's safeguards system has played an invaluable role. The Board of Governors has now approved the adoption of a Protocol intended to strengthen the Agency's capability to detect undeclared activities in States with comprehensive safeguards agreements. We shall follow with great interest the concrete gains in effectiveness and cost-efficiency as the system gets into full gear in the time-frame of 5 to 10 years.

Pakistan has always supported the Agency's efforts to strengthen safeguards measures and has actively

participated in the discussions on its safeguards strengthening the programme "93+2". However, Pakistan, as a country not party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is not obliged to accept the measures of safeguards in the Model Protocol. Pakistan will fully abide by its safeguards obligations by honouring the present safeguards agreements.

Nuclear safety is being continually enhanced technically and reinforced legally. A major initiative in this regard is the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which specifically addresses the safety of nuclear power stations. Pakistan was one of the first signatories of this Convention and has also ratified it. It is our sincere hope and expectation that the national reporting and peer review process envisaged in the Convention will strengthen both national commitment and international cooperation in this important field.

The promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy is the *raison d'être* of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Despite the negative public perception created in some countries and the fears aroused about the dangers of nuclear proliferation, nuclear energy remains a viable and attractive energy option for many countries, and particularly for the fossil fuel-deficient developing countries.

Since energy is a vital input to the development process, the energy consumption per capita is bound to rise steeply in developing countries. If this increase in energy demand is to be met by fossil fuel, which seems inevitable in the near term, there will be an unacceptable burden of carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides on the atmosphere. A massive deployment of hydropower can ease the situation to some extent, but the only proven and sustainable option is the use of nuclear heat and nuclear electricity. Despite Chernobyl, the safety record of the nuclear industry is unmatched by any other major enterprise. Opposition to nuclear power is thus either based on misunderstanding or perhaps a deliberate pretext to deny this technology to the less favoured countries.

To encourage and promote the peaceful uses of nuclear power, the basic requirement would be to provide technical assistance and cooperation to the concerned countries. The regulatory responsibility of the Agency should not lead to the imposition of arbitrary restrictions on the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The Agency should adopt non-discriminatory measures in providing access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in order to facilitate the achievement of the overall objective of a safe, clean and secure world.

As regards the long-standing issue of the size and composition of the Agency's Board of Governors, there is now a general agreement among member States that the efficiency, representativity and credibility of the Board would be enhanced by a well-considered addition of active stakeholders. We earnestly hope that a just solution to this issue will be agreed upon in the near future so that the underrepresented regions are given their rightful share in the membership of the Board. Pakistan will continue its cooperation with other member States for reaching a generally agreed formula for the expansion of the Board.

While the provision of technical assistance is the cornerstone of the Agency's work, any curtailment or roll-back of technical cooperation activities would constitute a retrogressive step. It would upset the balance that has so happily existed between the regulatory and promotional roles of the Agency. Such an eventuality would tend to distort the statutory mandate of the Organization. The two functions must therefore go hand in hand.

The role played so far by the Agency in upgrading the scientific profile of developing member States is commendable. However, continued efforts and mutual understanding among the industrialized and developing member States will be required to enable the Agency to live up to the expectations of member States. Additionally, a commitment governed not only by rules and regulations but largely by objectives and aspirations should influence the Agency's future.

As the International Atomic Energy Agency celebrates its fortieth anniversary, we would like to congratulate it for the progress it has achieved towards meeting the objectives laid down in its statute. Above all, we wish the Agency many more decades of distinction in the service of mankind.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I would first like to express to Mr. Hans Blix, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the gratitude of and recognition by the Government of Kuwait for his very valuable contribution at the head of this important international agency. I would also like to address my most sincere congratulations to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei on his election to the post of Director General of the IAEA. We

are convinced that Mr. ElBaradai will be equal to the important responsibilities of this post.

Kuwait supports unreservedly the important tasks performed by the IAEA since its establishment, convinced as we are of the importance of its role and responsibilities. The Agency cannot be successful in its activities without the cooperation of the members of the international community in support of its work. In this regard, Kuwait commends the contents of the annual report of the IAEA, presented to the General Assembly by the Director General, a document that has been submitted through document A/52/285.

We welcome the Agency's interest in the uses of atomic energy for peaceful purposes and for economic development, bearing in mind in particular the great technological progress in the use of this energy — especially in the areas of electric-power production and heating water.

Kuwait also notes with interest the progress made by the Agency in applying modern techniques in the area of food security through the use of atomic energy in the agro-food sector.

The Government of Kuwait follows with great interest the international efforts aimed at the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Kuwait therefore signed, on 24 September 1997, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which had been adopted by the General Assembly in September 1996. We hope that this Treaty will mark the beginning of general nuclear disarmament.

We are also greatly interested in IAEA activities in the application of the safeguards system, which aims to curb the use of nuclear applications for military purposes. We note with satisfaction the Agency's progress in enhancing the safeguards system.

As I pointed out at the beginning of my statement, putting an end to the arms race entails concerted international efforts for the objective of halting the arms race. The Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the Pelindaba Treaty, which created a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, are two examples of the implementation of the principle of halting the arms race and nuclear non-proliferation. In this respect, we hope that the region of the Middle East will also be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone. However, the refusal of Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards system constitutes the main obstacle to the realization of this objective. While welcoming the Director General's efforts to arrive at this objective, we would urge him to continue those efforts resolutely.

Kuwait strongly supports the important efforts undertaken by the IAEA and its inspection teams in applying the permanent monitoring and verification system which was established by the Agency after the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. In fact, it is an essential instrument to prevent any attempt on the part of the Iraqi Government to obtain materials which would enable it to proceed with its armaments programme aimed at producing nuclear weapons.

We welcome the efforts of the IAEA and its inspection teams, and we fully endorse the considerable efforts made by the United Nations Special Commission, which is charged with destroying Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. In this connection, we welcome the new Chairman of the Special Commission, Mr. Richard Butler, who is competently and devotedly pursuing the commendable work set up by his predecessor, Mr. Rolf Ekéus. We are likewise convinced of the importance of the role of the Special Commission inspectors in ensuring peace and stability in the region and in ensuring that it remains free of arms of mass destruction.

We are also following closely the development of the situation concerning the confrontation between the Security Council and Iraq — which has wished to impose conditions and restrictions aimed at hampering the work of the Special Commission charged with the destruction of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. Iraq's actions are a challenge to the decisions of the international community and threaten to escalate tensions in the Gulf region.

We reaffirm that Iraq must comply fully with all the resolutions of the Security Council in order to ensure stability in the region. We think that the Council must adopt a united and firm position to find a solution to this crisis, which has direct consequences for peace and security in the region. The Secretary-General had therefore offered a way out to Iraq to allow it to reexamine its decision to defy the Security Council and the international community. Unfortunately, Iraq has not seized that opportunity. We thank the Secretary-General for his noble effort.

Kuwait is a State that aspires to peace, security and stability. We will not abandon the dream that is shared by

all peoples of the world: to eliminate weapons of mass destruction from our beautiful planet.

When Kuwait speaks of its fears concerning weapons of mass destruction, it is on the basis of an experience of its own, whose repercussions continue to affect it. For that reason, Kuwait calls on the international community jointly to exploit the tremendous energy resources at its disposal in order to build a world in which peace, not strife, reigns and in which peoples could enjoy the fruits of development, far from the uncertainties of war and destruction — a world that believes in the link between peace, stability, development and the exploitation of our God-given energy resources in the interest of the prosperity and well-being of all the world's peoples.

Programme of work

The President: The next meeting of the General Committee will be held on Friday morning, 21 November, at 9.30 a.m. in Conference Room 4 to consider a request by Jamaica for the inclusion of an additional item entitled "Admission of the International Seabed Authority to Membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund", which is contained in document A/52/233 and Addendum 1.

I should also like to inform members that the programme of work covering the remainder of November and the first two weeks of December has just been issued as document A/INF/52/3/Add.2 and is being distributed to delegations in the Hall.

The list of speakers for each of the items listed in that document is now open.

The General Assembly will be kept informed, in due course, of the dates for the consideration of other agenda items as well as of any additions or changes.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.